



IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Monday & Tuesday, February 22 & 23, 2016
Riverside Hotel, North Star Conference Room, Boise, Idaho

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patti Best, Utilities/Energy Efficiency
Glen Burkhardt, Bureau of Land Management - Fire
Elaine Clegg, Association of Idaho Cities
Susan Cleverley, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
Gordon Sanders, Idaho Forest Owners Association (Alt.)
John DeGroot, Nez Perce Tribe
Janet Funk, Idaho Tree Farm Committee
Frank Gariglio, USDA-NRCS
Ken Knoch, ILRCC Vice-Chair, City Foresters/Idaho Parks & Recreation Association

Tim Maguire, Urban Forestry Collaborative Groups /
Bioregional Planning
Kurt Mettler, Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Robyn Miller, ILRCC Chair, Land Trust Organizations
Sal Palazzolo, Idaho Fish & Game (Alt.)
John Roberts, Idaho Emergency Management Assoc.
Jim Tucker, National Forest System, Fire Management
Janet Valle, Regions 1 & 4, USDA-FS, S&PF
Mike Wolcott, Association of Consulting Foresters

AGENCY STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT:

Ara Andrea, Acting Bureau Chief, Forestry Assistance, IDL
Craig Foss, Acting Bureau Chief, Fire, IDL
Mary Fritz, Stewardship Program Mgr., IDL
Tyre Holfeltz, Community Fire Program Mgr., IDL
Dave Stephenson, Urban Interface Program Mgr., IDL
Jennifer Russell, Project Coordinator, IDL
Suzie Jude, Forest Stewardship Program, IDL

Paul Orbuch, USDA-FS, Council of Western States Foresters
(contractor)
Peg Polichio, Idaho Dept. of Lands (contractor)
Lance Davison, Keystone Concept & TV Canopy Network
Wendy Green, Adams County SWCD
Margie Costa, Region 1, USDA-FS, S&PF
Mark Larson, USDS-FS (contractor)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Robyn Miller welcomed members and guests to the meeting. The Idaho Emergency Management Association (IEMA) will replace the Idaho Fire Chiefs Association representation on the Council. State Forester David Groeschl appointed John Roberts to represent IEMA, and reappointed Glen Burkhardt, Idaho Bureau of Land Management–Fire, to an additional 3-year term.

IDL staffing changes: Jennifer Russell is IDL's new Project Coordinator, replacing Mary Fritz. Mary is the Forest Stewardship Program Manager. Ara Andrea is Acting Forestry Assistance Bureau Chief in place of Craig Foss. Craig is Acting Fire Bureau Chief until this position is filled. Gina Davis has accepted a position as the Forest Health Group Leader with USFS R1. The IDL Forest Health and Forest Practices Program Manager positions are currently vacant; IDL hopes to fill these in the next month or so.

Update: Gary Hess has accepted the IDL Forest Practices Program Manager position.

2016 Landscape Scale Restoration & Western Fire Manager Grants

Five of the six Western Fire Manager (WFM) grant applications IDL submitted were funded: Nez Perce-County Line Pre-Attack, Idaho County-Lolo Creek, Boundary County-Sagle South, Lemhi County-North Fork/Leodore, and the Westwide Data Utilization/Risk Assessment.

Two of the three Landscape Scale Restoration grant proposals IDL submitted were funded: Teton Creek Collaborative Watershed Restoration project ranked #3 west-wide, and the Sweetwater Forest Enhancement

Project ranked #5. The University of Idaho's Forest Density Project ranked #29 and was not funded. Reviewer comments indicated that the long time for results (~30 years) was one reason for the low scores.

Susan indicated the Friends of the Teton River is a good group to work with and is pleased their project was funded. Robyn congratulated IDL on its success.

Developing National Outcome Performance Measures

Dave Stephenson provided background on the State and Private Forestry (S&PF) National Outcome Performance Measures initiative to update/revise reporting measures, a directive of the 2014 Farm Bill. The Forest Service contracted with the Timmons Group to create these in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and others. Dave, Margie Costa, and Janet Valle serve as subject matter experts for this effort. Based on many conversations between Timmons and a host of key audiences/partners and a poll of states on top issues, Timmons has selected the following fire and water centric stories on which to focus:

- 1) **Wildfire risk** is lower when landscapes are made more resilient;
- 2) **Wildfire risk** is lower when human-caused ignitions are reduced;
- 3) People are safer when communities are more **fire adapted**;
- 4) People are better protected when **wildfire response** is efficient and effective.
- 5) People have **clean drinking water** when upland watersheds have healthy, resilient forests
- 6) People have **clean drinking water** when stormwater runoff is mitigated

The goal is consistent reporting from state to state throughout the nation with measures that are useful at multiple scales. The Council discussed various aspects of this effort, including telling a compelling story, ensuring all S&PF programs are addressed, the need for a communication strategy and measuring success on important issues. OMB and appropriations staffers want performance measures that clearly demonstrate wise use of federal investments on the ground. ILRCC members provided feedback on the process for Dave to bring to the Timmons Group.

Forest Action Plan (FAP) Update

Dave reported the FAP Update is complete and thanked everyone for their input. In 2020, there will be a full revision of FAP (both the geospatial assessment and strategies). As part of a five-year plan to accomplish this, IDL will select three Priority Landscape Areas (PLAs) per year in which to meet with stakeholder groups to validate existing issues/strategies and add new ones as needed. Lemhi Pahsimeroi, Coeur d'Alene Basin, and West Central PLAs are those we will work with this year. Dave asked members to let him know what groups should be contacted within these PLAs. ILRCC members can have as much or as little participation as they'd like. Some were concerned that it might be too early to start this. Dave said he understood the concern, but a full revision will take quite a bit of time and spreading this process out should avoid the workload issues that occurred during the initial FAP creation.

2017 Western Fire Managers (WFM) Pre-Proposals

The two available wildfire grant programs are the Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) that funds projects directly adjacent to Forest Service hazardous fuel projects, and the WFM, which provides funding for efforts identified in County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). IDL can submit up to 10 WFM applications per year. Mike Wolcott indicated a conflict of interest due to his involvement with the proposed projects and suggested he recuse himself. Tyre stated the discussion would be general and without Council recommendations, so Mike participated in the discussion.

Tyre summarized pre-proposals for Boundary County and the Mid-Snake RC&D (Heatherlands). Additionally, he reported three LSR pre-proposals (Bear Lake, Pheasants Forever and Island Park) are fire centric and a better fit for the WFM grant program, and will be submitted as WFM proposals. Note that since Island Park submitted nearly identical pre-proposals for both LSR and WFM grant programs, IDL is only considering the WFM pre-proposal (see discussion on Island Park's pre-proposal under the LSR projects). Within the Island Park area, the Forest Service has its first National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) cleared project in 25 years, which opens the door for adjacency work in the Island Park area with funds from the HFR program. Island Park Cohesive Strategy (CS) funding will expire soon and all but \$30K has been spent with the remaining funds returning to IDL to re-grant for additional projects.

The Council requested a map to show projects from year-to-year pre-proposals and funded projects so it's easier to tell where work is proposed relative to past projects. ***Follow-up Item: Council requests IDL present historical context (GIS map) on CS, WFM, and LSR grants.***

Tyre reported 22 to 23 counties have received pass-through funding through IDL to implement projects listed in their respective CWPPs. IDL does not track work funded by the BLM, especially work performed in the southern part of the state. If members have additional feedback on WFM pre-proposals, please contact Tyre.

2017 LSR Project Pre-Proposals

Robyn requested members that have a conflict or involvement with any 2017 LSR pre-proposals self-identify and recuse themselves from the discussion on those project proposals.

Members provided suggestions for improvement and recommendations on the pre-proposals. IDL will use this feedback to select three of the four pre-proposals for the western competition.

1. Lolo Creek

Discussion revolved around the need for quick reseeded, restoration work that wasn't included in the proposal (e.g. salvage logging, site prep, tree planting), scarcity of available seed, and other funding sources. Both this and the Tom Taha pre-proposals are nearly identical. Both appear to have strong, committed partnerships and are worthy of moving forward. Council members suggested they be combined.

2. Tom Taha

Again, Council members suggested rolling the Lolo Creek proposal in with this one. There was some concern on how or whether non-deposition of sediment can be measured.

Tim Maguire recused himself from the meeting. Elaine Clegg joined the meeting in progress.

3. Economic and Geospatial Analysis of Idaho's Forest Resources

The idea for this project came out of the June 2015 ILRCC meeting. Currently, there isn't a methodology to roll up/assess the effectiveness and financial benefit of Federal investment in LSR and WFM projects over the last ten years. Council members suggested strengthening the proposal by including how funding is allocated on the landscape, how data can inform the FAP revision, ensuring the process is replicable in other states, identifying areas under-represented or under-funded, and engaging additional partners (universities). Council members also indicated that any products or data be available in the public domain.

Tim Maguire returned to the meeting.

4. Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC)

NOTE: Island Park submitted nearly identical pre-proposals for both WFM and LSR programs. Since this effort is fire-centric, only the WFM pre-proposal will be considered.

Though Susan Cleverley identified herself as serving on the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community group, she remained in the room during this project discussion but did not add anything above and beyond the pre-proposal.

Tyre noted this pre-proposal sustains and maintains staff positions (which is not a project), has few deliverables, and isn't competitive as written. Tyre will propose a re-write with the IPSFC and see where it goes from there. Putting a cost for deliverables (work) rather than on salaries will help. The proposed work is a shotgun approach to the issues—there's a need to do a better job connecting the dots. Provide constructive critique back for the community to address issues through outreach and education, or potentially engage through another collaborative group.

5. Treasure Valley Healthy Communities

Tim Maguire, Elaine Clegg, Patti Best recused themselves from the meeting.

This project will develop locally sustainable healthy community development policies and promote healthy, active lifestyles, capitalizing on the link between tree canopy and health. Council members noted measures need to be much stronger and correlate to the proposed activities. Dave noted additional partners now on board are University of Idaho Health Sciences, University of Idaho Integrated Design Lab, and Blue Cross Foundation of Idaho. Idaho Smart Growth as a partner would be the avenue for incorporating cultural values/ use of tree canopy. As written, the application is hard to read and understand (how it fits with the LSR grant program) for the average person. If selected, the pre-proposal will require substantial additional work.

Tim, Elaine and Patti returned to the meeting.

Meeting adjourned for the day 5:00 pm -----

Meeting resumed Tuesday, February 23, 2016, 8:00 am

Welcome & Introductions of guests

Robyn welcomed everyone to day 2 of the meeting. Craig Foss provided an overview of meeting topics today and introduced guests Paul Orbuch, Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) and USFS contractor, and Peg Polichio, IDL contractor. Additional guests introduced were Wendy Green (Adams County SWCD), Sue Stewart (USFS), Gary Brown (USFS), and Sherri Schwenke (USFS).

Federal Land Management: New Direction; Good Neighbor Authority

Paul Orbuch provided background on his involvement with CWSF and USFS to help coordinate western states around the Cohesive Strategy (CS). Idaho is recognized as unique among western states with its S&PF programs. CS is not regulatory or statutory, but instead focuses on resilient landscapes, effective fire response and fire adapted communities. Implementing CS framework involves identifying risk and prioritizing projects across jurisdictional boundaries in a collaborative manner while looking at the whole landscape. Each western state is working differently under the CS umbrella. Paul explained how other states in the West were integrating CS into their programs.

Peg Polichio, contractor for IDL, is assisting with Farm Bill initiatives. Peg (retired) has been a FS regional director of S&PF programs and the National Fire Plan Coordinator for IDL. Peg provided a synopsis of what Idaho has done to date with respect to the three CS tenets. The 2014 Farm Bill provided permanent stewardship authority for national forest (NF) lands through the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). As part of the process, IDL identified—and the Governor approved— 1.755 million FS acres at high risk for insect and disease within certain criteria. Additionally, the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) allows partnerships between states and NFs to implement treatments on NF lands. The NF retains responsibility for NEPA but the state uses its contracting processes to implement and streamline the work. The Farm Bill GNA provisions allow reinvestment of excess receipts back to NF for additional treatment work or for work within the geographical area on or off the forest.

During 2015 legislative session, CCR 126 passed and directed IDL to work with federal agencies on the Good Neighbor Authority. A flexible Master Agreement is currently in development that describes how the state and agencies will work cooperatively. More specific agreements under the Master Agreement will focus on project work with NFs, and will incorporate NEPA commitments. To address the misconception that the state is taking over federal lands, a communication piece will be very important. IDL and FS Public Information Officers will develop a unified message around the agreement.

To assist Idaho getting past a NEPA completion bottleneck, FS Region 1 has approval to hire another NEPA team. The Master Stewardship Agreement negotiations do not include tribes at this time, only the State of Idaho, FS Regions, and NFs. The process is not intended to be exclusive of tribes. Tribes want to be included in the conversation and have their own specific HFRA authorities to propose projects.

While Peg is currently contracted through IDL's Bureau of Forestry Assistance to help get this effort started, a legislative request is pending that would authorize two new IDL staff (funding coming from FS and Industry) to implement specific projects. GNA will enable FS to get more work done.

Review of 2015 Fire Season

Ara Andrea provided a brief overview of IDL fire season on state fire protection districts. Primary catalysts were low precipitation in northern and central Idaho in July and August coupled with high lightning strikes on August 10-11. For the year, approximately 78,500 acres burned under IDL protection across all ownerships totaling \$64.1M in fire costs, with 295 structures lost, including 75 residences. Sixty-one MMBF of fire killed timber will be salvaged. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is producing a risk map analysis for the Clearwater watershed and offers mitigation advice to build resiliency from fire, earthquakes, flood, and landslides. BHS and NRCS are concentrating regional efforts for private landowners to complete remediation work. Ara handed out a summary of the 2015 fire season.

NRCS & BHS Emergency Funding Assistance to Idaho Counties

Frank Gariglio informed the Council on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Idaho. EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to address resource concerns like forest health and sustainability, with a secondary benefit to mitigate wildland fire. Services are provided by Technical Service Providers (TSPs); TSPs are forestry consultants and/or IDL Private Forestry staff. Fire mitigation through EQIP was around \$13M this year. NRCS accepts EQIP sign-ups continuously throughout the year, with an annual cutoff in October to batch/ rank for funding. Many forest landowners missed this cutoff date, so NRCS created a second fire rehab pool of \$500K with a later deadline. Sign-ups this past fall only cover 6-7% of the tree planting needs in burned areas. Next year, NRCS will continue to address fire rehab. There's also a proposal out for Districts 1 and 2, in partnership with others, to emphasize NRCS fuels reduction practices through fuel breaks/fire breaks, both in the WUI and in upland areas. Since 2000, NRCS has obligated ~\$6M to on-the-ground EQIP planning and treatments to

private landowners in Idaho. Fire rehab funding has extended to the southern part of Idaho in rangelands with various types of fuel break treatments.

Susan Cleverley discussed the 2015 Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) Fire Mitigation Assistance Grants (FMAG) for eligible events including the Tepee, Municipal, Clearwater/Lawyer/Branch, and Cape Horn Fires in Idaho. Applicants for these events are mostly taxing entities. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides grants to States and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. FMAG declarations from March 4 – September 30, 2015 qualify for HMGP pilot program. HMGP funds mitigation measures during disaster recovery to avoid future disaster losses. The cost-share is 75% federal, 15% state, and 10% local. Applications are submitted to the State by e-mail or hard-copy using the HMGP application form. Each fire receives \$331,166 in federal funds. The application deadline is March 10, 2016. Applications will be reviewed by BHS and submitted to FEMA. For projects to be eligible for mitigation funding, they must be incorporated in the County Hazard Mitigation Plan (CWPP). Susan is working with Tyre to incorporate CWPPs into county All Hazard Mitigation Plans. Also in 2015, there was an October windstorm disaster declaration. Additional information on these grants can be found on the BHS website: <http://bhs.idaho.gov/>. Private landowner should talk to county emergency managers to apply. Also, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has funding sources that can be used to leverage and assist in these types of projects to engage wildlife biologists. ***Follow-up Item: IDL will post Susan's PPT on the ILRCC member webpage.***

ILRCC and the wildfire need

Craig Foss provided background on the evolution of Idaho's State & Private Forestry programs, the development of the Idaho State Forest Resource Assessment and Forest Action Plan, and the combining of separate federal program advisory councils into the single Idaho Lands Resource Coordinating Council (ILRCC).

One of the advisory groups melded into ILRCC was the Idaho Fire Plan Working Group (IFPWG), developed in 2002. Craig noted that IFPWG key focuses were on forested and non-forested lands, communication, coordination of hazardous fuels treatment grants, and an annual conference which brought the statewide fire community together.

The Cohesive Strategy tenets of Effective Fire Response, Resilient Landscapes and Fire Adapted Communities are the main drivers in the fire world. While resilient landscapes and, to a lesser extent, fire adapted communities are part of ILRCC efforts, there are still gaps that need to be addressed.

Several questions were discussed by the group, including: At what level should ILRCC participate in CS and former IFPWG efforts (such as the annual conference)? Is there a need to have an (ILRCC) sub-group operate on these issues and report back up through ILRCC? Could ILRCC be the home for implementation of CS? Also, how do/should we pick up lost efforts formerly under the IFPWG? Could subcommittees for each program meet for discussion and then reconvene and report out in the larger group? Because ILRCC only meets twice a year should there be a third meeting each year in the fall so more time can be expended on various topics?

The question of "What is ILRCC's role relative to the Cohesive Strategy?" was discussed but was deferred by the chair to the next meeting, as there are several other things in play that may influence the decision of the group. A transcript of the entire ILRCC/FPWG/Cohesive Strategy discussion can be requested from IDL.

Status of CWPPs: How do they fit into County All Hazard Mitigation Plans (AHMPs)

IDL Community Fire Program Manager (Tyre) reviews the county AHMPs for the following elements: 1) inclusive participant list, 2) information about the county, 3) a WUI definition and location, 4) completion of a risk assessment, 5) appropriate detail on treatment areas and activities on all projects across ownerships

(private, and government), 6) list of available wildfire response resources from all fire organizations, and 7) a brief narrative of and location for past accomplishments. Optional item is a pre-attack coordination plan.

The value of the AHMP is that they are looked at annually—*this was the expectation of the CWPP as well, but did not typically occur*—to determine if projects listed are still viable, what projects are completed, and if needed new projects were added. If there are significant changes made to a previously approved plan, it may require review and approval by IDL, BHS and FEMA.

Cassia and Benewah plans have been reviewed, approved, and in implementation phase. Bonneville, Idaho, Kootenai, Teton, and Fremont counties are in the update/integration phase now. Shoshone, Bonner, and Blaine Counties will be initiating their update/integration in the coming weeks. Lemhi County has chosen not to integrate AHMP and CWPP; these will remain separate and reference each other for specific projects. Additionally, BHS has ten counties under contract with the University of Idaho to develop/update their AHMPs and incorporate their CWPPs. Tyre will engage with the BHS contract and be involved with the counties where able/available.

There was a question about availability of plans on-line. Historically CWPPs were posted on the IDL website but were taken off 2-3 years ago due to issues related to plan maintenance. ILRCC feedback was sought on the need for housing CWPPs or key sections of AHMPs in a single repository rather than at an individual county; further discussion will be needed at future meeting(s).

MEETING FEEDBACK, WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING

ILRCC has moved away from the fall meeting but based on today's feedback, this may need to be revisited. Next meeting will be in June for a 2-day meeting and field tour. Suggested locations include Sandpoint or Coeur d'Alene with a tour of the Clagstone Meadows Forest Legacy project. IDL will figure out logistics and location for meeting.

Regarding the summer Above Base meeting, Jim Tucker will coordinate with the Regional office this for ½ day meeting prior to ILRCC.

The week of June 13th not good for some; a Doodle poll will be sent out with several dates.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzie Jude

List of follow-up items:

1. IDL to present historical context on CS, WFM, and LSR grants.
2. IDL will post Susan's FMAG/ HMGP PowerPoint on the ILRCC member webpage.
3. Doodle poll will be sent to members for potential dates/locations for next meeting.